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(71) Applicant(s)
INTERNATIONAL AMUSEMENT MANUFACTURING
COMPANY S.L.
(Incorporated in Spain)
CONSELL DE CENT 106-108,
08015 BARCELONA, Spain

(72) Inventor(s)
Michael Charles Evans

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service
Swindell & Pearson
48 Friar Gate, DERBY, DE1 1GY,
United Kingdom

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(54) Abstract Title
A gaming machine having a touch sensitive display

(57) A gaming machine comprises display means 10 depicting an image of a plurality of coaxial individually spinnable reels 12 with markings 14 on each reel 12 such that in a rest position a one marking 14 on each reel 12 lies in a win line 18. The display means 10 is touch sensitive and is arranged so as to be touchable by a player at least adjacent the depiction of a marking 14 in the win line 18 such that touching of the display means 10 can cause the visible marking 14 to change to a subsequent marking to denote a previously hidden message or symbol. The machine may have a selective signal such as an audible alarm to indicate when touching of the display means 10 will cause a "scratch" marking 14 to gradually change to denote for example a cash win.

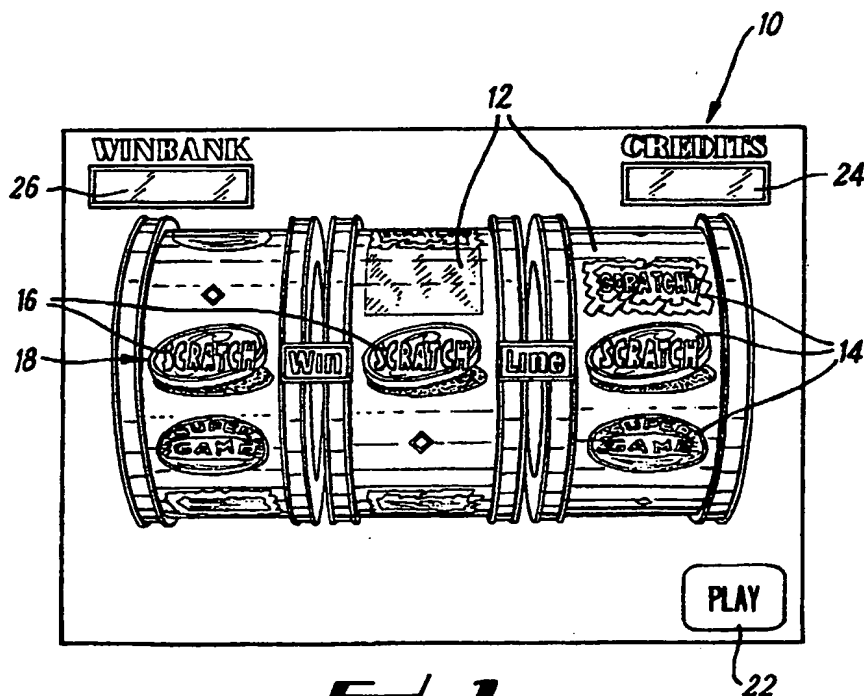
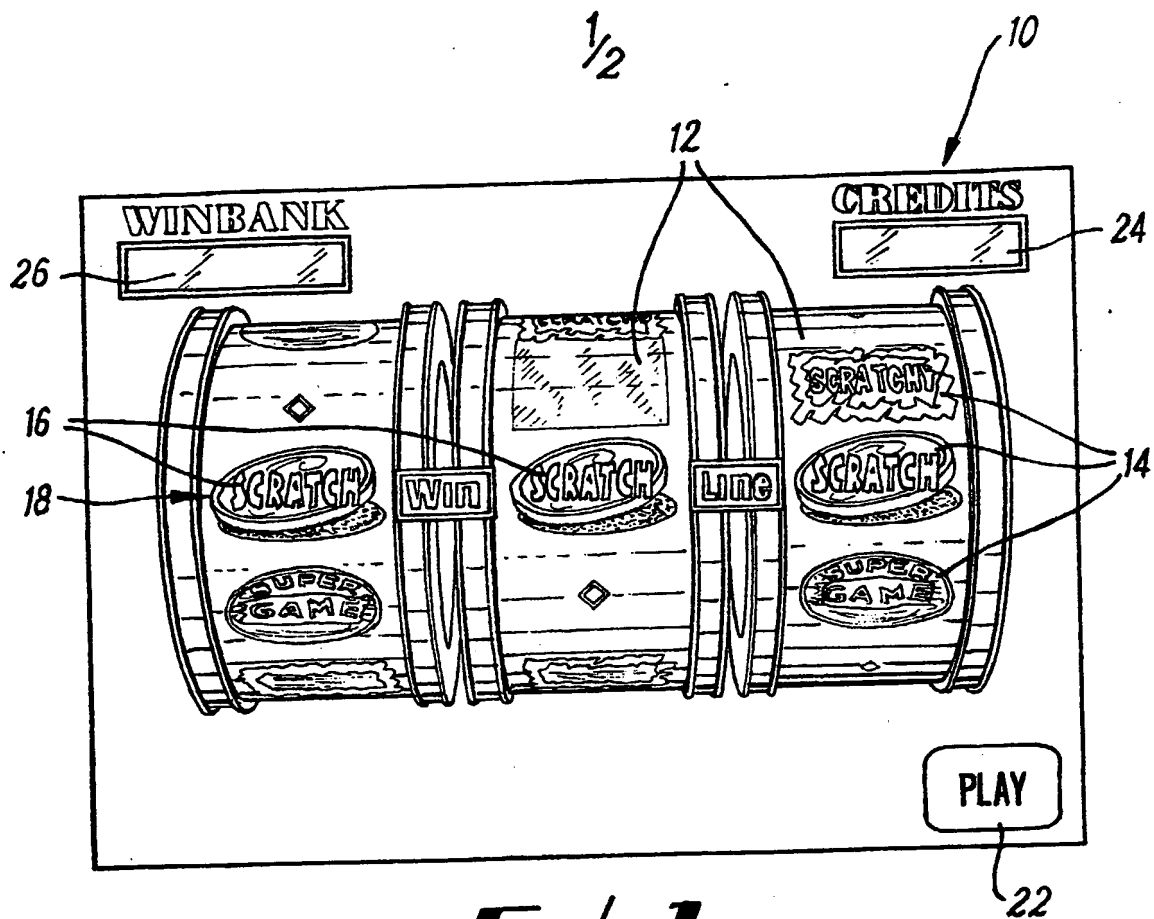


Fig. 1

At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy. The claims were filed later than the filing date but within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1995. The print reflects an assignment of the application under the provisions of Section 30 of the Patents Act 1977.



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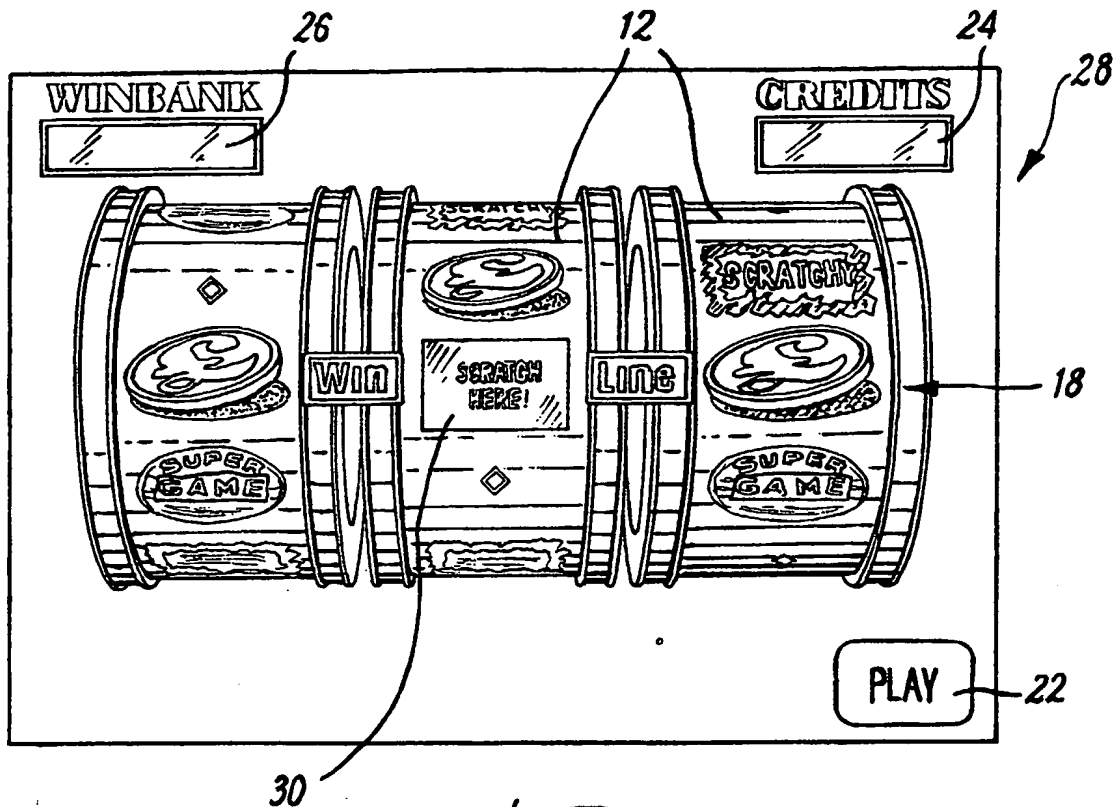


FIG. 3

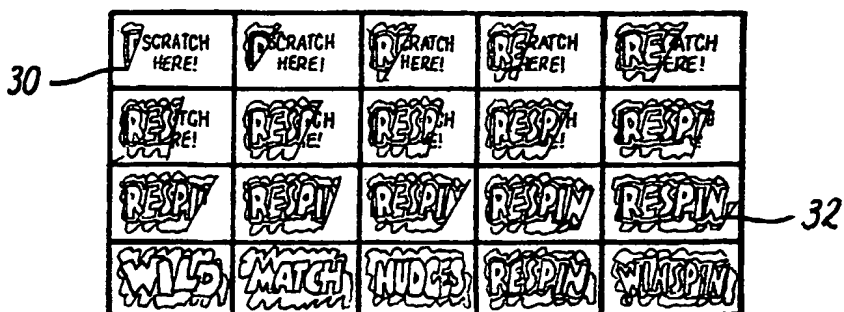


FIG. 4

Gaming Machine

This invention concerns improvements in or relating to gaming machines.

The design of gaming machines is continually evolving and it is important to provide novel features to attract people to a gaming machine and retain their interest therein.

According to the present invention there is provided a gaming machine comprising display means depicting an image of a plurality of coaxial individually spinnable reels with markings on each reel such that in a rest position a one marking on each reel lies in a win line, the display means being touch sensitive and arranged so as to be touchable by a player at least adjacent the depiction of a marking in the win line such that touching of the display means can cause the visible marking to change to a subsequent marking.

The display means may also depict markings adjacent to those in the win line.

The machine may include a selective signal to indicate when touching of the display means will cause a marking to change, and the signal may indicate which marking or markings can be changed by touching.

The signal may be audible and/or visible. The selectively visible signal may itself be the marking which can change, and the form of the marking may alter to provide the signal by way of flashing, a different colour, a different colour background, or other means.

The apparatus may be arranged such that a marking gradually changes to a subsequent marking, and a plurality of touches may be required to provide full changing to the subsequent marking.

The subsequent marking may reveal a bonus and/or financial win.

Embodiments of the present invention will now be described by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Fig. 1 is a diagrammatic view of a display means of a first gaming machine according to the invention;

Fig. 2 shows a series of views illustrating a marking on the machine of Fig. 1 changing to a subsequent marking; and

Figs. 3 and 4 are respectively similar views to Figs. 1 and 2 of a second gaming machine according to the invention.

Figs. 1 and 2 show a gaming machine with a display means 10 including a touch sensitive screen. The display means 10 illustrates three coaxial reels 12 with a plurality of markings 14 thereon. The markings 14 include a "scratch" marking 16, three of which are indicated in Fig. 1. When the scratch markings 16 occur in a win line 18, the markings 16 will flash to attract a player's attention. By touching the screen on or adjacent a one of the scratch markings 16, the respective marking 16 will gradually change to denote a cash win 20. Fig. 2 indicates a scratch marking 16 gradually being transformed, as if being scratched off to reveal a cash win 20 of £5.00. A win may be paid out which amounts to the sum of any revealed cash wins 20.

The display means 10 is conventional in providing a play button area 22 which when touched if there are sufficient credits in the machine causes the reels 12 to spin. Display panels 24, 26 are provided to respectively indicate the number of remaining credits a person has, i.e. the number of spins they can make, and any wins that person has gained which are as yet unpaid.

Fig. 2 shows a display means 28 of a second gaming machine according to the invention. The display means 28 is similar to the display means 10 except as indicated. In this instance, a "scratch here" marking 30 can be provided on any one of the reels 12 in the win line 18. When one of the markings 30 occurs in the win line 18 it will flash, and if the screen is touched

on or adjacent the marking 30 it will gradually change to a "bonus award" marking 32. Fig. 4 shows a scratch here marking 30 gradually changing to a bonus award marking 32, as if the scratch here marking 30 was being scratched off. The bonus award marking 32 in this instance is a respin, which could be of the respective reel 12 only, or all three reels 12. Fig. 4 also shows possible bonus award markings 32, namely "wild", "match", "nudge", and "winspin".

There are thus described gaming machines which provide for a particularly attractive feature in that the reels can be altered when it is indicated that this is possible, by simply touching the screen on or adjacent a respective marking on the reels.

Various modifications may be made without departing from the scope of the invention. For instance a different means can be provided to indicate that the touching or scratching facility is available. This could comprise a separate symbol which may light up and may include marking to illustrate that the touch facility is available. Alternatively or in addition an audible signal may be provided in the form of an alarm, buzzer or perhaps spoken instructions. Different markings could be provided on the reels which can change to a subsequent marking. For example the other markings may comprise a question mark which when touched changes to a different symbol, which symbol may automatically provide a win, or may provide a win if a particular pattern of markings in the win line then occurs.

Whilst endeavouring in the foregoing specification to draw attention to those features of the invention believed to be of particular importance it should be understood that the Applicant claims protection in respect of any patentable feature or combination of features hereinbefore referred to and/or shown in the drawings whether or not particular emphasis has been placed thereon.

Claims

1. A gaming machine comprising display means depicting an image of a plurality of coaxial individually spinnable reels with markings on each reel such that in a rest position a one marking on each reel lies in a win line, the display means being touch sensitive and arranged so as to be touchable by a player at least adjacent the depiction of a marking in the win line such that touching of the display means can cause the visible marking to change to a subsequent marking.
2. A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the display means depict markings adjacent to those in the win line.
3. A gaming machine according to claims 1 or 2, wherein the machine includes a selective signal to indicate when touching of the display means will cause a marking to change.
4. A gaming machine according to claim 3, wherein the signal indicates which marking or markings can be changed by touching.
5. A gaming machine according to claims 3 or 4, wherein the signal is audible.
6. A gaming machine according to any of claims 3 to 5, wherein the signal is visible.
7. A gaming machine according to claim 6, wherein the selectively visible signal is itself the marking which can change.
8. A gaming machine according to claim 7, wherein the form of the marking alters to provide the signal by way of flashing, a different colour, a different colour background, or other means.

9. A gaming machine according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the apparatus is arranged such that a marking gradually changes to a subsequent marking.
10. A gaming machine according to claim 9, wherein a plurality of touches is required to provide full changing to the subsequent marking.
11. A gaming machine according to claims 9 or 10, wherein the subsequent marking reveals a bonus and/or financial win.
12. A gaming machine substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figs. 1 and 2 of the accompanying drawings.
13. A gaming machine substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figs. 3 and 4 of the accompanying drawings.
14. Any novel subject matter or combination including novel subject matter disclosed herein, whether or not within the scope of or relating to the same invention as any of the preceding claims.